

DRAKE LINEAGE IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

"Soon after the conquest of Wessex by the Saxons, a family or clan called Drago appear to have taken possession of an old Roman and British encampment in what is now Musbury, Devon County, England, which subsequently became known as Mt. Drake.

"From this family it is probable that all of the name in England and Ireland are descended, as altho the crests of the various families of Drakes in later days varied, their arms were the same, thus proving the common origin of the family. That the family is of great antiquity is shown from the fact that before the Norman Conquest 1066 A.D., they were well established in Devon County.

"The name Drago, or Draco, the Latin for Drake, was in use among the Romans and signifies 'one who draws or leads', a 'leader'. The name may be found on the English records as early as the middle of the thirteenth century. In the yr. 1272 John Drake held lands by grant of Edward I.

"The extreme simplicity of the Drake coat-of-arms is another indication of the great antiquity of the family. The figure in the shield or escutcheon is called by heralds a wivern, which is another name for the dragon, and this has always been the arms of the family. The crests furnish the distinguishing mark of the different branches. That of the family of Ashe was originally an 'Eagle displayed, Gules'. The motto has ever been 'Aquila non Accusat muscas' - an eagle does not attempt to catch flies.

"Mount Drake, the original home of the Drakes, is situated in the manor of Musbury, Axminster, Devon County, England. Mount Drake is a table land or plateau of about one hundred sixty acres, half way up the great ridge which goes by the name of Musbury Castle. It was once the seat of a British, and then of a Roman encampment, and was a fortified camp quite capable of accommodating two hundred persons or more. It was defended on three sides by a natural ravine and on the upper side by bogs and a tangle of brushwood, part of which still remains.

"John Drake at the time of his marriage to Christiana Billett, altho living at Mount Drake, and presenting to the living of Musbury, was engaged in trade and shipping at Exmouth near by. His son, John, who succeeded him, was engaged in the same business at Otterton and his successor, John Drake, altho making his home at Mount Drake, where both he and his son jointly presented to the living of the Musbury church was a shipowner and trader at Exmouth.

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"John Drake, Esquire, of Mount Drake and Exmouth, in the County of Devon, a man of great estate, and a name of no less antiquity," says Prince in his 'Worthies of Devon' 'married in the time of Henry V. (1413-1422A.D.) Christiana, daughter and heiress of John Billet of Ashe. By this alliance, the estate of Ashe, in the parish of Musbury, came to the Drake family, and was handed down in the name from father to son for fully four hundred years altho the most usual residence was Mount Drake, a mansion previously built by them in the same parish and undoubtedly the original home of the Drakes, they having occupied it before the coming of William the Conqueror. This John Drake or possibly